FIRST COMICS
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NO. 5
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WARP
B RYNNER

FIRST™ NOTES

KEEPING A GOOD THING GOING

When my old buddy Mike Grell called me, oh about sixteen months ago, and told me **Starslayer** was available — this was after we had agreed to do **Jon Sable, Freelance** — I felt like I was slapped in the face with a twenty pound bag of *deja vu*.

Now It Can Be Told — the secret origin of **Starslayer.** Not the hero, the comic book.

If you just happen to have a photographic memory or you keep on file every word ever published in comics fanzine news columns, you probably remember an announcement — made by me on behalf of my then-employer — about the brand-new title coming from DC Comics: **Starslayer.** The highly-talented Ross Andru was to be editor, and Ross and I worked rather closely in promoting Mike's exciting new character. Shortly after we made that announcement, DC endured a rather massive series of cut-backs and schedule changes, causing two immediate effects on Mike's life: **Starslayer** was cancelled, and the Warlord (Mike's other creation for DC) went monthly. Retroactively monthly, in fact. So, Mike was placed in the position of suddenly being a zillion weeks late. I helped Mike regain the rights to his character — after all, DC had no use for **Starslayer.**

Well, one thing led to another and about nine months later, Mike and I were going to make **Starslayer** the lead feature in a new, slick monthly magazine. But about twelve hours after receiving the "final" go-ahead, our distributor got cold feet (somebody convinced them we were going to do porno; obviously, somebody who doesn't know either Mike or me very well). Since both of us had other commitments at that time, the magazine died and the energy that would have gone into it ultimately (from my end) was converted into First Comics.

We did share one other **Starslayer** event: after learning that another Big Name Artist, who shall remain nameless, was planning on coming out with a character named Starslayer, we took sufficient steps necessary to secure Mike's rights to the title and to inform the Big Name Artist of his mistake.

After that, Mike did a **Starslayer** portfolio for Pacific Comics, and signed on to do a six-issue comic book run at about the same time.

By now, Mike and I had been using the word "Starslayer" the way one talks about an errant child. So when Mike suggested First Comics pick up **Starslayer** with issue seven, I didn't know whether to question *his* sanity or *mine.*

Mike immediately picked up on my trepidation. "No, I don't mean I'm going to try and do 56 pages of story and art a month (**Starslayer** *and* **Jon Sable, Freelance**); I'll write the follow-up stories and provide the breakdowns, and we'll find somebody fantastic to take over the art chores."

Terrific. We signed the papers, started work on **Jon Sable,** and put the whole thing in a drawer until "somebody fantastic" showed up.

Then Lenin Delsol walked into our lives.

We had been working with Lenin, and I sent Mike photocopies of his pencils on the Sargon story in **Warp #1.** Mike called me about eighty seconds after opening the package.

I don't want to quote Mike — after all, he *is* a friend — but what it all boiled down to was, if we didn't sign Lenin up to pencil **Starslayer,** Mike would do unspeakable things to us with an elephant gun.

Great. Now all we needed was an inker.

Shortly after Lenin delivered his first pencils on the issue, Mike Gustovich called me up. Bob McLeod was shifting over from pencil artist to inker on Marvel's X-Men spin-off book, The New Mutants, and Mike wanted to know if we just might possibly have some work.

Now I have respected Gustovich's work ever since he showed up in Power Comics, a fairly short-lived semi-professional comic book that brought us the works of Dave Sim and Wendy and Richard Pini, among others. And I respected his work as editor, writer, inker and co-owner of The Justice Machine, another first-class semi-professional comic book series. So Joe Staton, in his capacity as art director, and I talked it over. Gustovich is talented, and has a style somewhat similar to Grell's. So, Gustovich got the assignment, and we had our **Starslayer** team.

And now you have our first issue of **Starslayer.** Just a bit over five years after Mike Grell first layed the concept on me.

Now the fun *really* begins.

— Mike Gold

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

ALSO FIRST IN APRIL

E-MAN #5: "Getting Void," written by **Martin Pasko,** drawn by **Joe Staton.** Introducing "The Psychobabbler" — **E-Man's** weirdest, and most dangerous, super-villain ever! He might sound funny, and he might look funny, but if **E-Man,** Nova Kane and Mike Mauser can't stop him, it's curtains for the Big Apple! And, in the back-page spot, the four-color debut of **Reed Waller's** famed **Omaha, the Cat Dancer!**

JON SABLE, FREELANCE #3: "A Storm Over Eden, " written and drawn by **Mike Grell.** Now that you've got a hook on what Jon Sable does and how he does it, it's time to discover how he became who he is. The first of our four-part origin story starts off in the Olympic Village in Munich, takes you to the African wilds, and leaves you with your heart in your hands. Mike Grell's most powerful story ever!

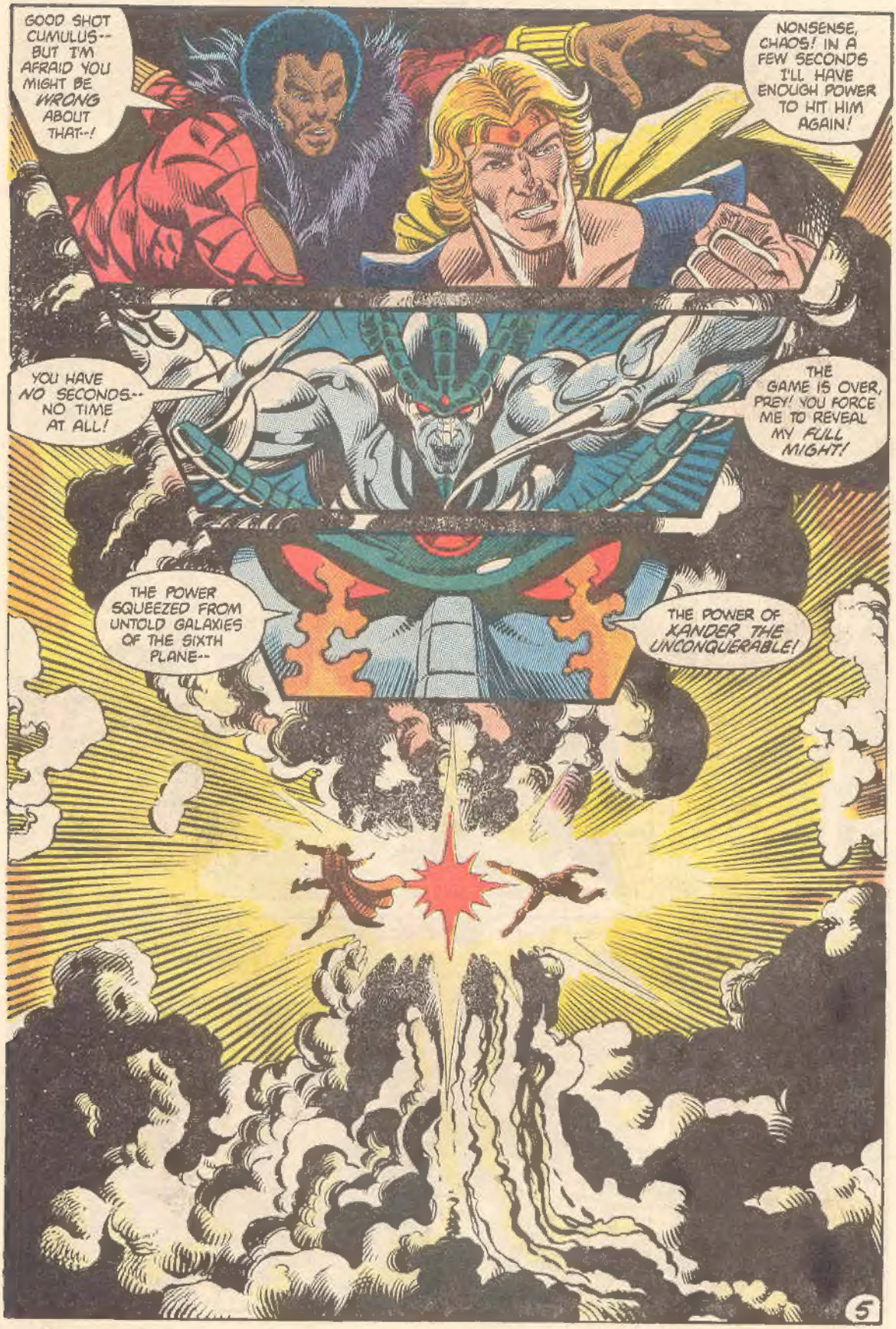
STARSLAYER #7: "A Case of Do or Die!" written and broken down by **Mike Grell,** pencilled by **Lenin Delsol,** inked by **Mike Gustovich.** Where do you go after the Earth is blown up? More importantly, after you've blown up the planet, how do you dodge the former inhabitants who are likely to be more than just a little bit ticked off? This issue starts Torin Mac Quillon off on a whole new quest!

WARP
CHAPTER FIVE
THE DARKEST HOUR!
THE REGION OF ALIEN SPACE BEYOND FEN-RA, CALLED THE GREAT VOID, IS SHATTERED BY CRACKLING ENERGIES AND A CHILL, GRATING VOICE!
WELCOME, PRINCELINGS! KANOER THE UNCONQUERABLE HAS BEEN AWAITING YOU!
YOUR DEATHS SHALL BE MOST SATISFYING!
FRANK BRUNNER . PETER GILLIS . BRUCE PATTERSON . KEN BRUZENAK . JANICE COHEN . MIKE GOLD
ADAPTATION/PENCILS SCRIPT INKS LETTERS COLORS EDITS
BASED ON THE PLAYS BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND

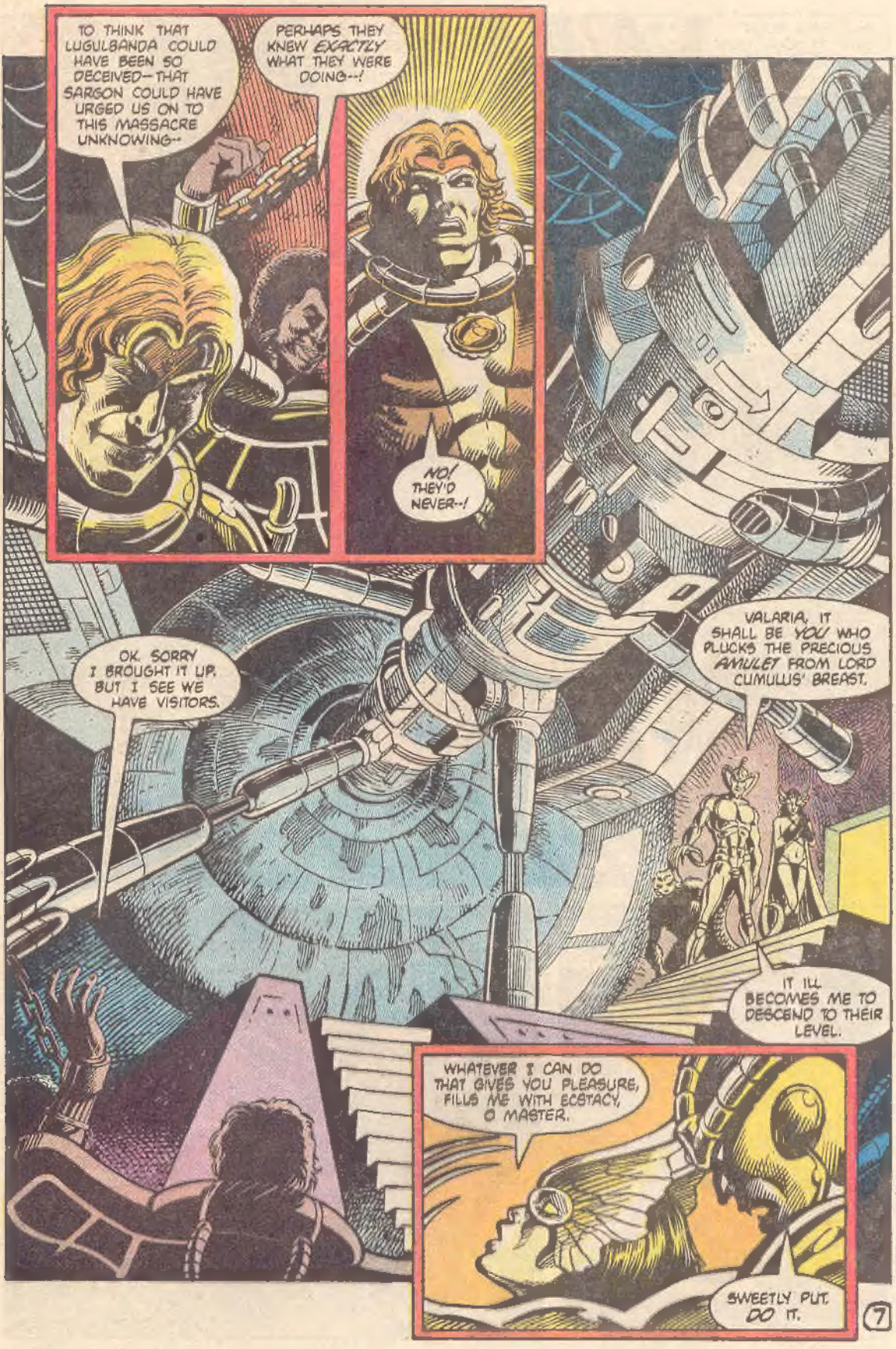
I'M AFRAID NOT, YOU ARROGANT SCUM!
FALL BEFORE MY INSANITY RAY, XANDER!
INSANITY RAY, PRINCE OF MADNESS? A PERILOUS WEAPON, SURELY--
CHAOS-- BROTHER!
--WHEN THE WIELDER IS AS UNSTABLE AS YOURSELF? WHAT IF IT WERE REFLECTED BACK ON YOU?
HOW APPALLINGLY FREUDIAN.
OBSERVE YOUR BROTHER, PRINCELING-- WRITHING HELPLESSLY IN HIS OWN FEARS!
IT'S GRABBED ME--STRANGLING ME! BY THE CRYSTAL, CUMULUS-STOP IT!
DON'T SHRIEK LIKE THAT, LORD CUMULUS! I CAN--HANDLE--
--ANYTHING--?
A CONVINCING CASE FOR SURRENDER, I'D SAY.
2

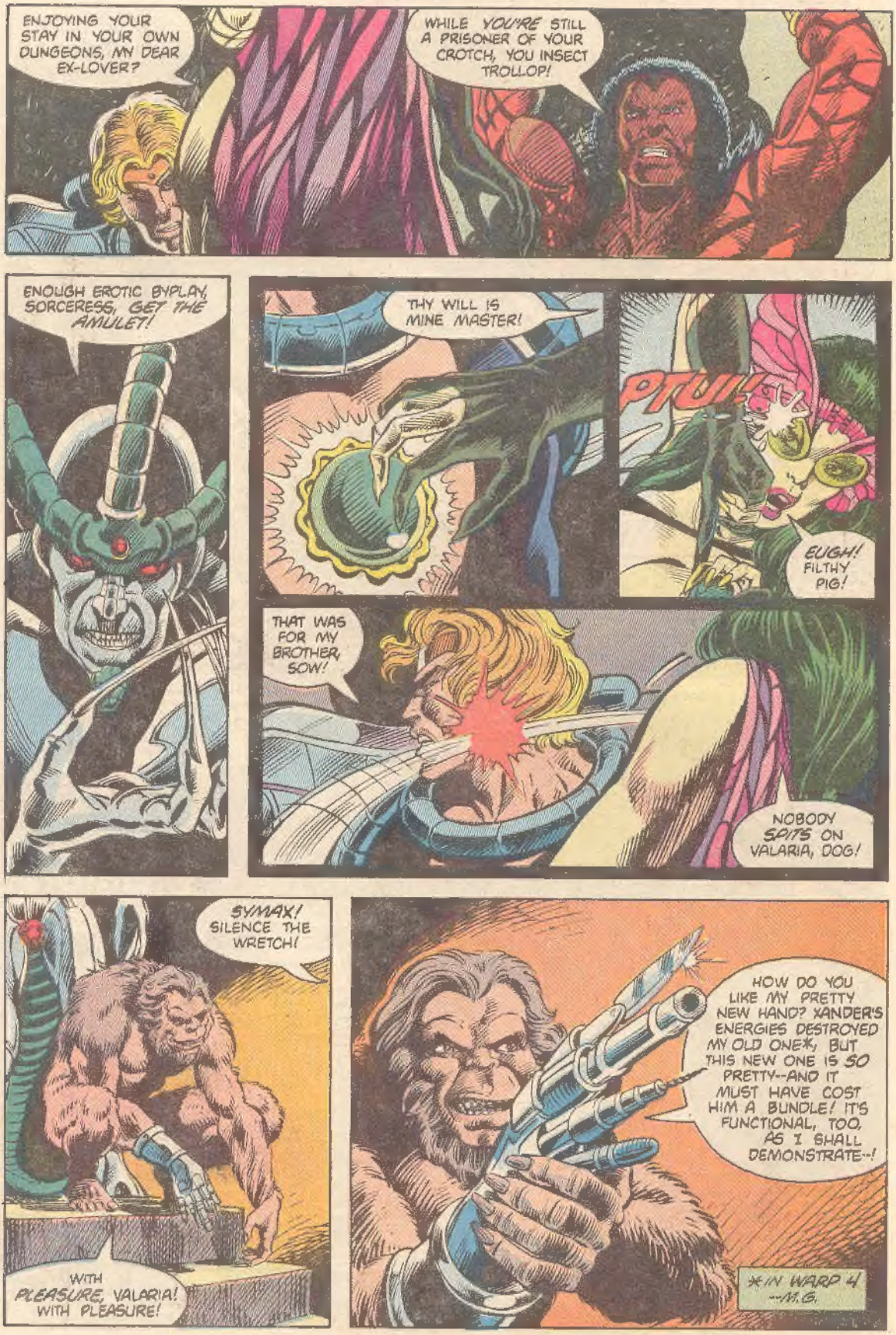
I SHALL HAVE YOUR AMULET--OR YOUR LIFE! DON'T MAKE IT BOTH!
YOU'LL HAVE NEITHER, XANDER, NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY!
XANDER NEVER TRIES, PREY! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU WITH YOUR OWN BRAIN!
I'LL TAKE YOUR MENTAL BLAST, MONSTER--
TAKE IT-- MASTER IT--
--AND THROW IT BACK IN YOUR FACE!
KWHOOOM!
TOO MUCH POWER--! THE BACKLASH--!

DIE, YOU PURULENT SNAKE! DIE!
HAVE YOU NO DIGNITY AT ALL, PRINCELING?
A PHYSICAL ATTACK--ON XANDER?
I CONQUERED YOU--MADE YOU BRING YOUR BROTHER CUMULUS HERE TO ME!
I EXPECTED YOUR TREACHERY; I DID NOT EXPECT IDIOCY!
IDIOCY IS FATAL, CHAOS!
CUMULUS--GET HIM--GET HIM BEFORE HE GETS ME--
ANNNGH!
DON'T WORRY, BROTHER --MY ENERGIES ARE A MATCH FOR HIS!
4


GOOD SHOT CUMULUS-- BUT I'M AFRAID YOU MIGHT BE WRONG ABOUT THAT--!
NONSENSE, CHAOS! IN A FEW SECONDS I'LL HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO HIT HIM AGAIN!
YOU HAVE NO SECONDS-- NO TIME AT ALL!
THE GAME IS OVER, PREY! YOU FORCE ME TO REVEAL MY FULL MIGHT!
THE POWER SQUEEZED FROM UNTOLD GALAXIES OF THE SIXTH PLANE--
THE POWER OF XANDER THE UNCONQUERABLE!
5

CHAOS, I THINK...
--THEREFORE I AM?
... I THINK WE'RE ALIVE...
OH. YES, WELL, THAT'S A FINE DISTINCTION --AND ONLY TEMPORARY.
WE WERE HELPLESS AGAINST XANDER. WHY DIDN'T HE FINISH US OFF?
BECAUSE WE WERE HELPLESS. HE'S AN INTELLIGENT PREDATOR, AND TRUE TO FORM, HE LIKES PULLING THE WINGS OFF LITTLE FLIES. JUST LIKE I USED TO DO.
WELL, THAT'S WHERE HE MADE HIS MISTAKE! I'LL JUST--GODS! MY MUSCLES ARE LIKE BUTTER!
OH, THAT. THE HARNESS YOU'RE WEARING IS AN ETERNAL ENERGY STUPRATOR. IT CATHECTS YOUR LIBIDINAL FORCE, THEN METASTASIZES IT. DRAINS YOU DRY WITH EACH PULSE.
AMUSING DEVICE. I WHIPPED IT UP ONE AFTERNOON. NO END OF LAUGHS.
HE HAD QUITE A SENSE OF IRONY IN HOOKING IT UP TO YOU, I MUST SAY.
CHAOS--
IT MUST BE TERRIBLE WHEN YOUR ONLY WEAPON IS YOUR MIND--
AND YOU'RE A MANIAC.


TO THINK THAT LUGULBANDA COULD HAVE BEEN SO DECEIVED--THAT SARGON COULD HAVE URGED US ON TO THIS MASSACRE UNKNOWING--
PERHAPS THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE DOING--!
NO! THEY'D NEVER--!
VALARIA, IT SHALL BE YOU WHO PLUCKS THE PRECIOUS AMULET FROM LORD CUMULUS' BREAST.
OK. SORRY I BROUGHT IT UP. BUT I SEE WE HAVE VISITORS.
IT ILL BECOMES ME TO DESCEND TO THEIR LEVEL.
WHATEVER I CAN DO THAT GIVES YOU PLEASURE, FILLS ME WITH ECSTACY, O MASTER.
SWEETLY PUT. DO IT.

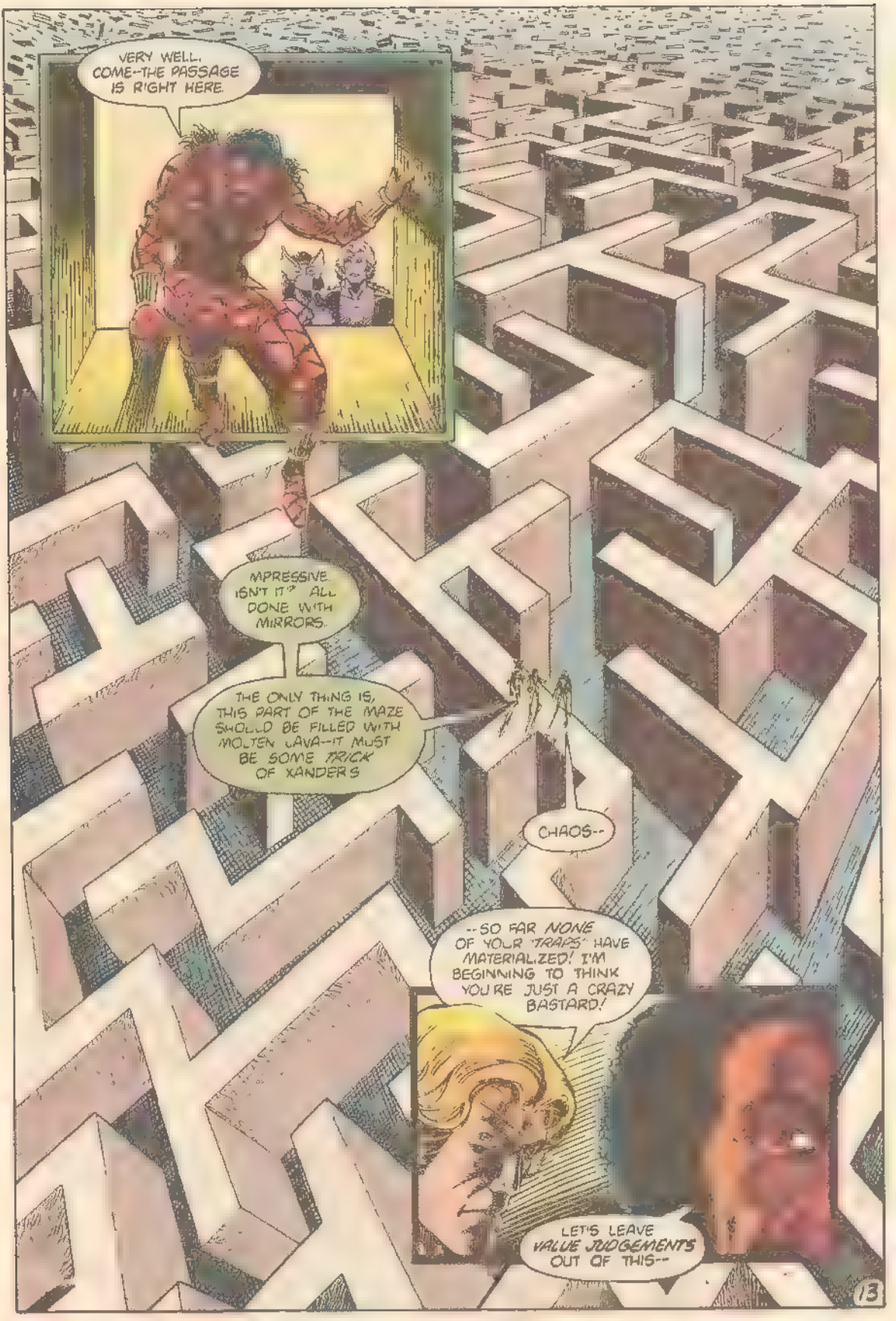

ENJOYING YOUR STAY IN YOUR OWN DUNGEONS, MY DEAR EX-LOVER?
WHILE YOU'RE STILL A PRISONER OF YOUR CROTCH, YOU INSECT TROLLOP!
ENOUGH EROTIC BYPLAY, SORCERESS, GET THE AMULET!
THY WILL IS MINE MASTER!
PTUI!
EUGH! FILTHY PIG!
THAT WAS FOR MY BROTHER, SOW!
NOBODY SPITS ON VALARIA, DOG!
SYMAX! SILENCE THE WRETCH!
WITH PLEASURE, VALARIA! WITH PLEASURE!
HOW DO YOU LIKE MY PRETTY NEW HAND? XANDER'S ENERGIES DESTROYED MY OLD ONE*, BUT THIS NEW ONE IS SO PRETTY--AND IT MUST HAVE COST HIM A BUNDLE! IT'S FUNCTIONAL, TOO, AS I SHALL DEMONSTRATE--!
*IN WARP 4 --M.G.

YOU NEVER GAVE ME ANYTHING AS NICE AS THIS LASER, PRINCE CHAOS! XANDER KNOWS HOW TO TREAT HIS FRIENDS!
BUT MY FAVORITE FINGER IS THE DRILL!
WHIRRR!
IT SEEMS TO ME YOUR TEETH COULD USE A LITTLE WORK, MY EX-PRINCE--!
SYMAX! THAT IS ENOUGH!
IF YOU ARE FINISHED ABUSING MY GIFTS AND WASTING MY TIME-
YOUR PARDON, MASTER, I WAS ONLY--
ONLY? YOU ARE MY LIVE SLAVES--OR MY DEAD PREY! YOU ARE NEVER 'ONLY'!
THEN, MASTER, THIS SLAVE GIVES UNTO YOU THE AMULET OF THREEFOLD WISDOM, KEY TO THE COSMIC MYSTERIES!
I KISS YOUR FEET AND SUE FOR MERCY.

THE AMULET-- MINE!!
SYMAX-- TO ME!
MASTER! WHAT--?
SYMAX, ACTIVATE YOUR LASER. THIS CREATURE MYSTICALLY GAVE BIRTH TO ME! SHE MUST NEVER SPAWN AGAIN!
NO--
SEAL HER.
KUTHALU!!
AND NOW THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER A THREAT OR A USEFUL TOOL, YOU MAY JOIN THE OTHER DEBRIS BELOW. THANK YOU FOR THE AMULET.
YOU FILTH! YOU PERVERT!
HE'S NO PERVERT, CUMULUS--HE'S AN ARTIST!

I LEAVE SUCH PETTY DISTINCTIONS TO YOU--AS I LEAVE VALARIA.
A FINAL NOTE OF CAUTION: SHOULD THE INSECT QUEEN BETRAY MY AFFECTIONS BY TRYING TO ESCAPE, SHE SHALL FIND HERSELF ABRUPTLY DEAD
NOW COME, SYMAX YOU MUST GROOM ME FOR MY MEETING WITH LUGULBANDA--KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE
KUTHALU...
C'MON, VAL HONEY, GET THESE CHAINS OFF ME--WE CAN'T LET HIM GET MY CRYSTAL!
THERE IS NO PLACE TO GO.
SNAP OUT OF IT, KIDDO! HEY--IT'LL BE JUST YOU AND ME LIKE THE OLD TIMES AGAIN!
WHY BE THE BRIDE OF A CORPSE?
MUST BEAT XANDER TO FEN-RA..LUGULBANDA... SARGON WON'T STAND CHANCE WITHOUT ME,. PLEASE...
XANDER WOULD KILL ME.
VAL--HE'S DYING! AND IF CUMULUS DIES, THE UNIVERSE'S HOPE DIES WITH HIM!

THANK YOU, VALARIA.
THANK YOU-- MY POWER IS RENEWING ITSELF
VALARIA--BY THIS ACT YOU HAVE REDEEMED YOURSELF IN MY EYES.
AND NOW, CHAOS, I GIVE YOU FREEDOM--THE FREEDOM TO DIE LIKE A RAT HERE, OR LIKE A MAN DEFENDING PEN-RA!
DON'T YOU EVER MAKE PLANS TO WIN, CUMULUS?
MAYBE HOW DO WE ESCAPE?
WE CAN'T GO UP-- THAT'S WHERE XANDER IS!
THAT LEAVES ONLY--THE MAZE OF MADNESS BELOW US.
GOOD! THE MAZE IT IS!
BUT THE MAZE IS AN INSANE LABYRINTH, GUARDED BY ADVANCED AND SINISTER TRAPS AND TORTURES OF MY OWN DESIGN!
DISINTEGRATORS-- SPIROCHETES-- IT'D BE INSTANT DEATH!!
FINE-- YOU STAY HERE AND EXPLAIN IT TO XANDER!
12

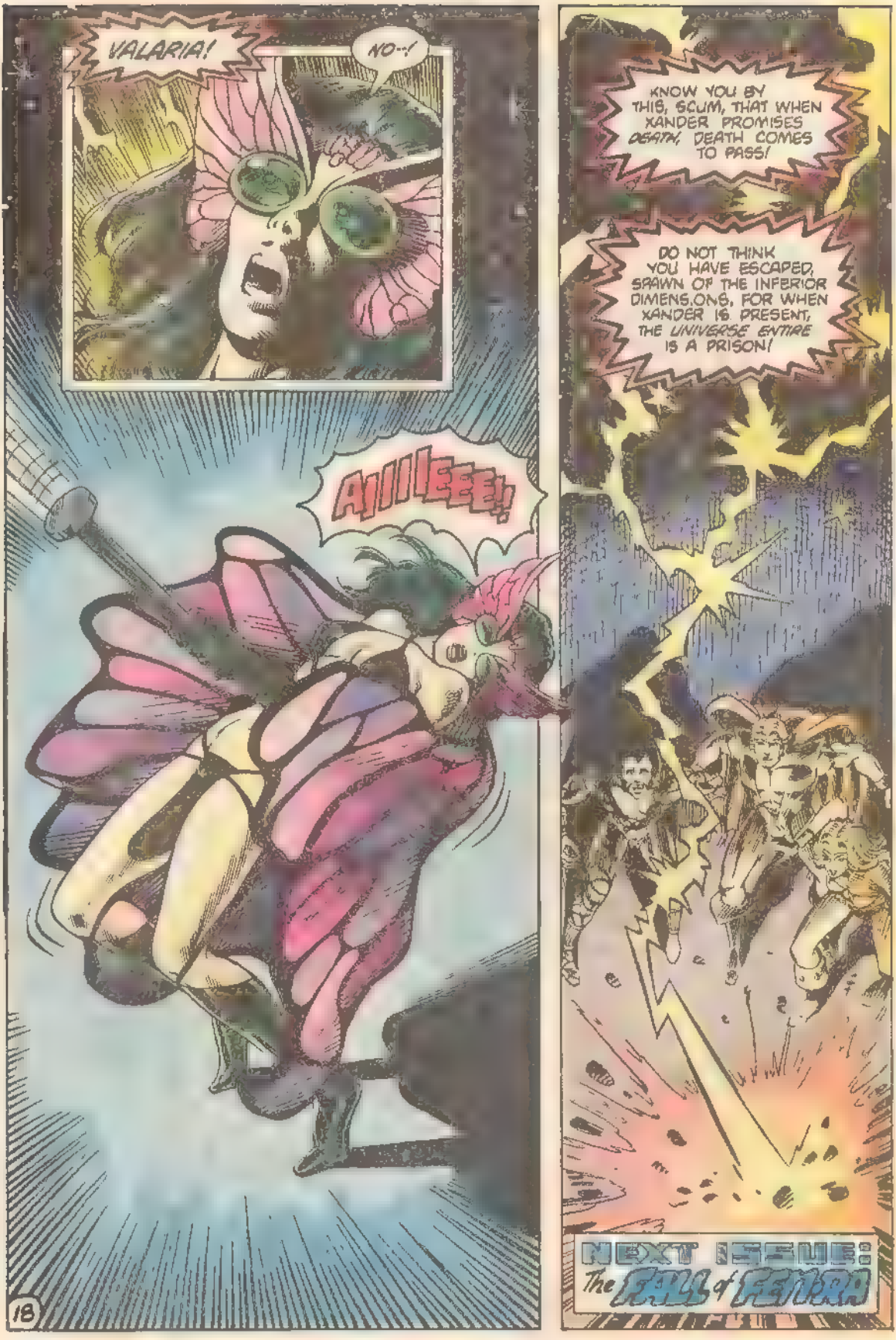

VERY WELL. COME--THE PASSAGE IS RIGHT HERE.
MPRESSIVE. ISN'T IT? ALL DONE WITH MIRRORS.
THE ONLY THING IS, THIS PART OF THE MAZE SHOULD BE FILLED WITH MOLTEN LAVA--IT MUST BE SOME TRICK OF XANDER'S
CHAOS--
--SO FAR NONE OF YOUR "TRAPS" HAVE MATERIALIZED! I'M BEGINNING TO THINK YOU'RE JUST A CRAZY BASTARD!
LET'S LEAVE VALUE JUDGEMENTS OUT OF THIS--

NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MY NEXT TRAP-- AN INTANGIBLE TRIPWIRE THAT WILL ACTIVATE THE SABRENIAN, MY ANDROID SWORDSMAN, WHOSE ARMS ARE TERRAWATT LASER BLADES!
BAH! I WON'T INDULGE YOUR STUPID FANTASIES ANY LONGER! THERE!!
YIDE!
COMPILE KILLPHASE! RUN KILLPHASE!
STAND BACK! I'LL HANDLE THIS!
CUMULUS! KEEP YOUR GUARD UP! WATCH OUT FOR HIS RIGHT!
EXECUTE KILLPH-- - CLICK -

IT'S STOPPED-- AS IF ITS PLUG WERE PULLED!
IT CAN ONLY BE XANDER! HE'S SHUT DOWN MY DEVICES--HE WANTS US TO ESCAPE!
I DON'T LIKE THIS! IS HE TOYING WITH US-- OR SOMETHING MORE SINISTER?
WE CAN WORRY ABOUT IT LATER--I'VE FOUND THE EXIT, BROTHER!
AND SO, THREE ZONES OF FLIGHT LEAVE THE COLUMNS OF FORTRESS ROTTWANG WHICH BROODS IN EERIE SILENCE.
AND AFTER A JOURNEY THROUGH NEITHER TIME NOR SPACE--
FEN-RA AT LAST! BUT--THERE'S SOME KIND OF DEFENSIVE BARRIER AROUND IT!
AND THEY DIDN'T GIVE YOU A KEY, I SUPPOSE?
I REJOICE IN YOUR SAFE RETURN, MY LORDS.
16

CHARMED, I'M SURE.
NOW KINDLY CUT THE CRAP AND LET US IN BEFORE XANDER ATTACKS, OK?
YOU ARE SCANT PACES FROM REFUGE, NOBLE PRINCE
THE SORCERESS, HOWEVER, IS CLOSE TO NOTHING BUT HER GRAVE.
WE OWE VALARIA OUR FREEDOM AND OUR LIVES, SARGON. SHE COMES WITH US.
THE WITCH SHALL NOT PASS.
THEN NONE OF US SHALL!
OH, BROTHER!
DO NOT LET SARGON'S IMPERIAL CODE OF HONOR AND VENGEANCE IMPERIL YOUR LIVES AS IT HAS TATTERED MINE. TAKE SHELTER--VALARIA WILL STAY.
NO!
PLEASE--I ONCE FAILED TO KILL YOU WITH TREACHERY--DO NOT LET ME SUCCEED NOW WITH HONOR! YOU MUST PROTECT THE CRYSTAL
THIS IS A FAMILY MATTER. GO

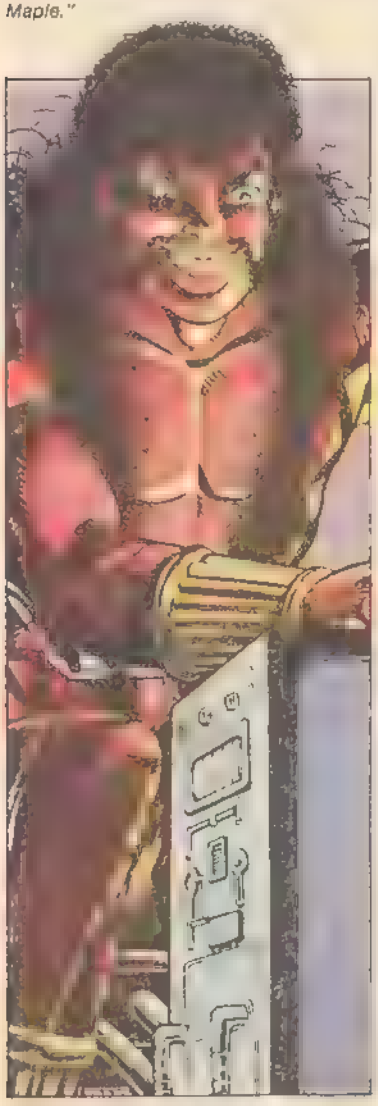
YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT IT'S A FAMILY MATTER!!
I DUG OUR PARENTS' GRAVES WITH MY BARE HANDS! AND I SWORE I'D DO THE SAME TO THEIR BETRAYER!
YOU WILL NOT BE DENIED THAT SATISFACTION MUCH LONGER. XANDER WILL STRIKE SOON, AND YOU MAY WATCH ME DIE
..STEN, SARGON, IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER DEAD SO BADLY, DON'T LET XANDER HAVE THE FUN.. KILL HER YOURSELF!
VERY WELL, MY LORD
AND NOW, SORCERESS, I -
--I CANNOT DO IT COME INSIDE WITH US--
- MY SISTER


VALARIA!
NO--!
AIIIEEE!!
KNOW YOU BY THIS, SCUM, THAT WHEN XANDER PROMISES *DEATH*, DEATH COMES TO PASS!
DO NOT THINK YOU HAVE ESCAPED, SPAWN OF THE INFERIOR DIMENSIONS, FOR WHEN XANDER IS PRESENT, THE *UNIVERSE ENTIRE* IS A PRISON!
NEXT ISSUE:
The FALL of FEITORA

warped words

FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

We've got a ton of **Warp** *#2 letters to get to, but we're going to kick off with a missive on #1 from the mysterious "T.M Maple."*



Dear Mr. Gold

Firstly, I can't resist saying that this should be the perfect lettercol for me since there are those who hold that my letters very often contain *many* Warped Words. As proof: when I read your address, I couldn't help but speculate as to whether or not the recent moves of Thor and Supergirl to Chicago were attempts by the mainstream comics companies to forestall your advance into the marketplace.

Secondly, let me add my congratulations to the many that you have doubtless already received. To have come this far is an accomplishment in itself. Any source of quality comics is welcome. Now, it remains to be seen if you will be a consistant supplier of such.

Right off the bat, I was interested to read certain information in the copyright box (I mean, when I read a comic cover to cover, I try to do a good job of it!), namely that the "stories, characters and incidents" in the mag are "trademarks of First Comics, Inc." It had been my impression that all of your material was to be owned by the creators, not by you. Is this a special arrangement for Warp? If so, what is the arrangement? What is your general policy in this area? I would be interested to hear from you about this matter that is the topic of so much interest in the comics world today.

As to the story itself, I was naturally quite impressed with the artwork. The plot itself was not quite up to those standards, but it does have good possibilities; things are still a bit jumbled to make a firm judgement as yet. I did like how David/Cumulus was initially taken in by Valaria! I was only sorry that this interesting confusion was resolved so quickly.

It has always amazed me how heroes, when thrown into a totally unfamiliar situation, almost always seem to quickly and correctly determine which is the "right" side. Think of the various conflicts in our world today--and you will see that "right" is not always solely the property of one side, nor is it always easily determined.

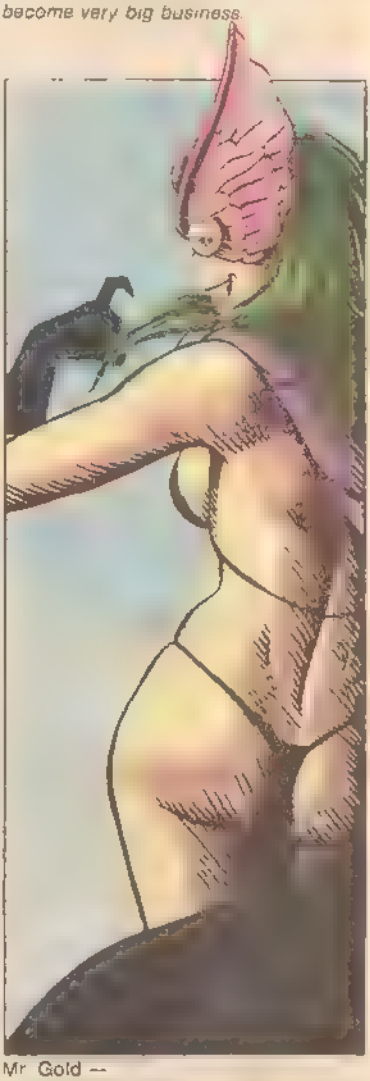
The Sargon backup was welcome both for its new creative talent and its wry sense of humor.

"T.M. Maple"
Toronto, Ontario

We received a couple of other letters on the copyright notice, T.M., so I'll try and clear this stuff up without having to reach for our copyright lawyers.

You are correct in assuming our comics are owned by their creators, or, in the case of **Warp**, *by the holding company for the theatrical property. All of our copyright filings name the authors and note the fact that First Comics is filing on their behalf. First does control various rights for varying lengths of time. In order to market these rights — including the comic book — and to protect all concerned, we take on the burden of filing and maintaining the copyrights and trademarks. If, at some point in the future, First Comics is no longer involved with a specific title, all of these rights, including copyright control revert to the creators or their assigns. That's according to contract.*

In the past year, "comic book law" has become very big business.



Mr. Gold --

I just wanted to express my delight at the first two issues of Warp. I came to comics late — my parents were not the type to encourage this type of behavior — and I "found" them about fifteen years after Heinlein and Norton.

Frank Brunner's cover art is superb. I am more familiar with his Elric art, and recently bought a portfolio of his at a small convention in Dallas. You could not have picked a better artist to coax out of "retirement."

I am withholding judgement on the Faceless Ones. I like the names — which is a definite plus — but I regret seeing

Farr disappear so soon after his introduction. Of course, all things considered, comic characters are never as dead as they seem.

I must confess that I would regret Chaos being conquered in the near future. I have a particular affinity for his portrayal.

Helen J. Stegall
3423 Forest Lane
Dallas, TX

By now, Helen, you know your deepest fears have been conquered: comic characters are indeed never as dead as they seem, and Farr "reappeared" at the end of our Faceless Ones saga. Chaos is still batting around, and whereas things will seem rather bleak for him next issue, I should mention we will have our second **Chaos, Prince of Madness / Warp Special** *out sometime this summer, courtesy of Peter Gillis, writer, and George Freeman artist.*

Dear First Comics

I had heard that First Comics was going to publish a comic book based upon the Warp plays, but I didn't expect much. I had heard that Frank Brunner was going to draw it, but I still didn't expect much. Now, I have seen two issues of Warp... I'm expecting a lot from the third issue!

Brunner's art has been wonderful (no surprise there, granted), but his art has been accompanied by two even better scripts from Mr. Gillis. It's the script part that shocked me. You see, I had seen some Neal Adams Warp sketches a long time ago, and I immediately became prejudiced about the play, as well as anything connected with it.

As I'm sure you've noticed, the costumes seemed to have been designed for sexual attractiveness first and practicality second. As we all know, in the wonderful world of comic books, a sexy costume is usually designed to make up for a poor script (i.e. the Thorn, Warlord, Ms. Marvel, any 20-year-old female to appear in Conan within the last seven years, etc.), but this doesn't appear to be the case with Warp.

Warp has fine scripts and great art, not the poor scripts, mediocre art and sexual vulgarity other publishers have been calling artistic freedom for the past decade.

Chuck All good
2105 Churchill
Greenboro, NC

I hate to disagree with a man who's just complimented us, but I don't think the sexy costumes in the majority of comics you listed were there to make up for weak script; I think Warlord, the Thorn, a period of Ms. Marvel and the earlier of the Conan stories you noted were at least well written. A matter of taste, I suppose.

There's one thing to remember about the costumes in **Warp:** *they all resemble the original stage costumes designed by Cookie Gluck. You state sexy costumes are designed with practicality as a secondary concern; let me tell you, the actors and actresses in the sundry stage productions of* **Warp** *over the past decade wore those costumes well, and did so under the most harrowing of circumstances — all the action you read in the* **Warp** *comic book was there on the stage.*

Again, thanks for the compliments.

Mike

The second issue is history, and Warp is only getting better.

I think Cumulus is adapting to his new role a bit too easily. Maybe he was born for it, but I still think such a sudden change cannot come without some period of adjustment.

Chaos may be a bit too hip looking, but he seems like a delightful villain type.

Killing off a character such as Sargon is something unique, especially in the second issue. But it seems like something a bit too unique, so I wouldn't be surprised if she were to show up at some later time.

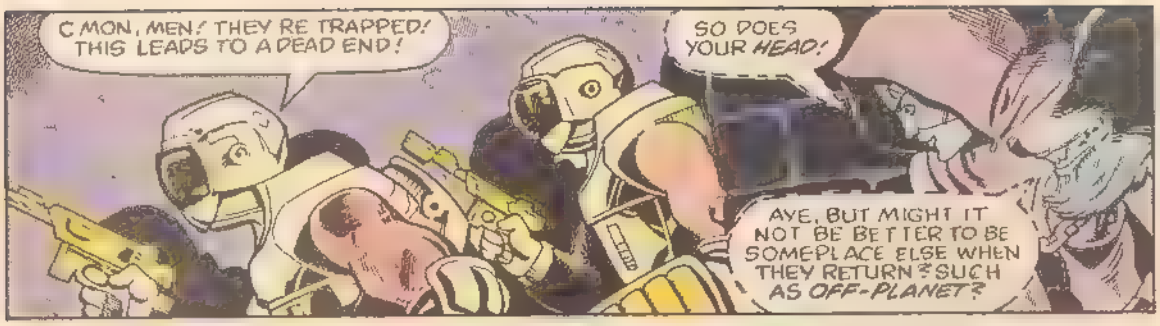
I like the Harris/Ditko back-up feature. The Warp universe fits Ditko's art style superbly. Jack C. Harris's story is still a bit overloaded with words, but they seem to work together very well.

Mike Sopp
438 W. 32
Erie, PA

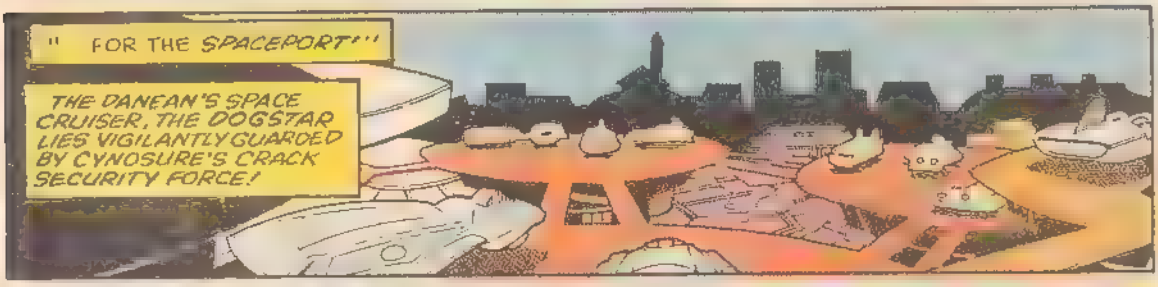
— Mike Gold

WELCOME TO MUNDEN'S, A SLIGHTLY SLEAZY BAR IN A SOMEWHAT SCUMMY SECTION OF THE PAN-DIMENSIONAL CITY OF CYNOSURE. . .
. . OR WHAT WAS CYNOSURE BEFORE THE PRINCE OF MADNESS GOT DONE WITH IT. THE BAR ISN'T AS SLEAZY AS SOME OF ITS PATRONS.
. . AND MAKE LIKE SANDWICH. WHAT YOU SAY, HAH?
SORRY. I LIKE MY MEN TO HAVE ALL THEIR TEETH.
ME GOT SEE?
KRAK
BOK
WAK
TAK
SLOSH
. . GRRRRR. . . !
WHAM!

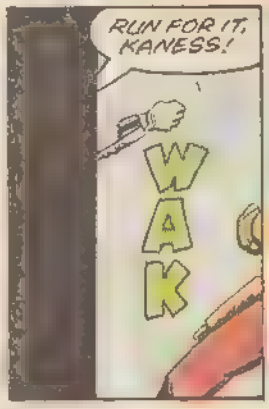
IN THESE PARTS, THAT'S ALL IT TAKES TO START A BRAWL!
SARGON
MISTRESS OF WAR
THE DOGS of WAR!
KISS MY BOOT!
WHO'S A MOOK?
WANK IS IT NOW?
TAKE DOT, OLD CUCUMBER!
MY MAMA TOLE ME NOT TO COME...!
DISCRETION BEING THE BETTER PART OF LIVING, THE BARKEEP SCRAMBLES AWAY TO CALL THE TRANS-DIMENSIONAL POLICE!
MY THANKS!
IN A BAR BRAWL, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE SOMEONE GUARDING YOUR BACK..
MY PLEASURE!
, MY..GOD...!
.. AND TO KNOW THE QUICKEST WAY OUT WHEN THE COPS ARRIVE!
HALT! YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST!
TARIM!
THE WINDOW!
CRASH!
HALT OR WE'LL FIRE!
NOW WHAT DO WE DO?
LOSE OURSELVES IN THE SHADOWS!
JOHN OSTRANDER WRITER
LENIN DELSOL PENCILLER
RICK BURCHETT INKER
JANICE CHIANG LETTERER
JANICE COHEN COLORIST
MIKE GOLD EDITOR


C'MON, MEN! THEY'RE TRAPPED! THIS LEADS TO A DEAD END!
SO DOES YOUR HEAD!
AYE, BUT MIGHT IT NOT BE BETTER TO BE SOMEPLACE ELSE WHEN THEY RETURN? SUCH AS OFF-PLANET?

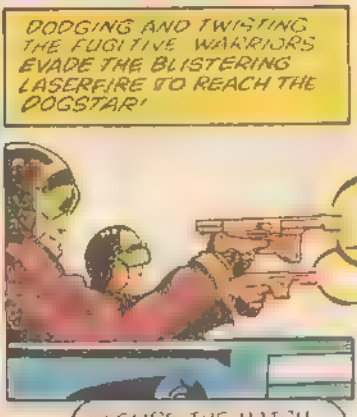
WHY NOT COME WITH ME? I AM KANESS KANORUM, CHAMPION OF THE DANAE, WHOM SOME CALL THE DOGS OF WAR!
MY NAME IS...BERTHA, BERTHA OF THE BLADE! LEAD ON, KANESS KANORUM!
THEN QUICKLY, FRIEND BERTHA, WHILE WE CAN. LET US MAKE A BREAK

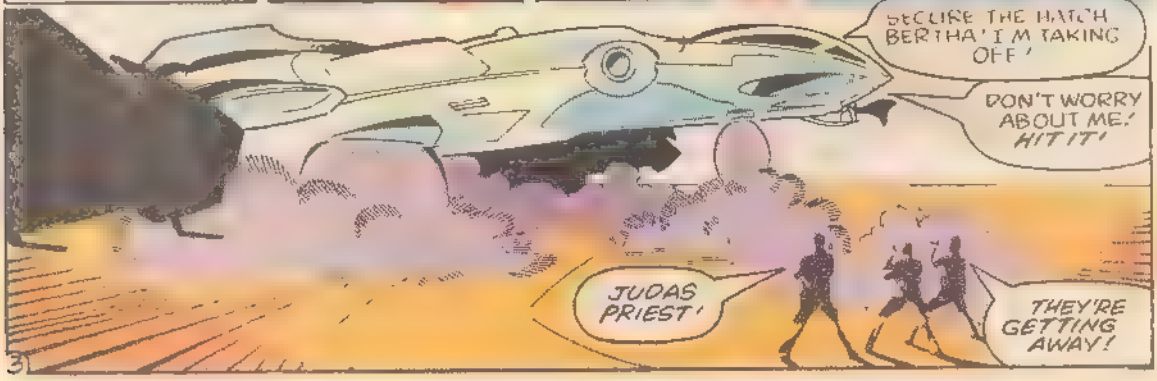

" FOR THE SPACEPORT!"
THE DANEAN'S SPACE CRUISER, THE DOGSTAR LIES VIGILANTLY GUARDED BY CYNOSURE'S CRACK SECURITY FORCE!

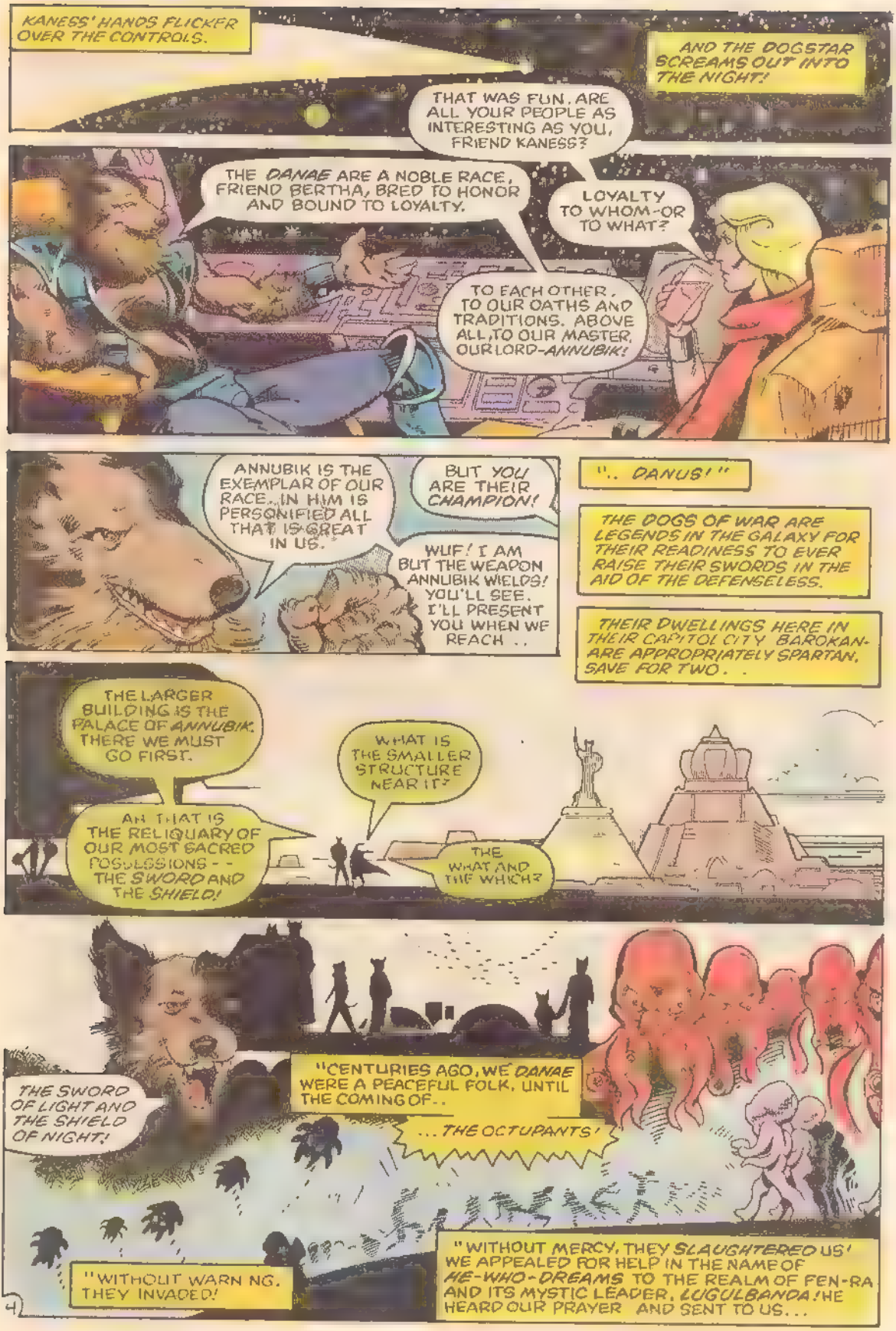
ACH ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER GROAT
WONDER WHAT MARTY WANTS TO DO TONIGHT?

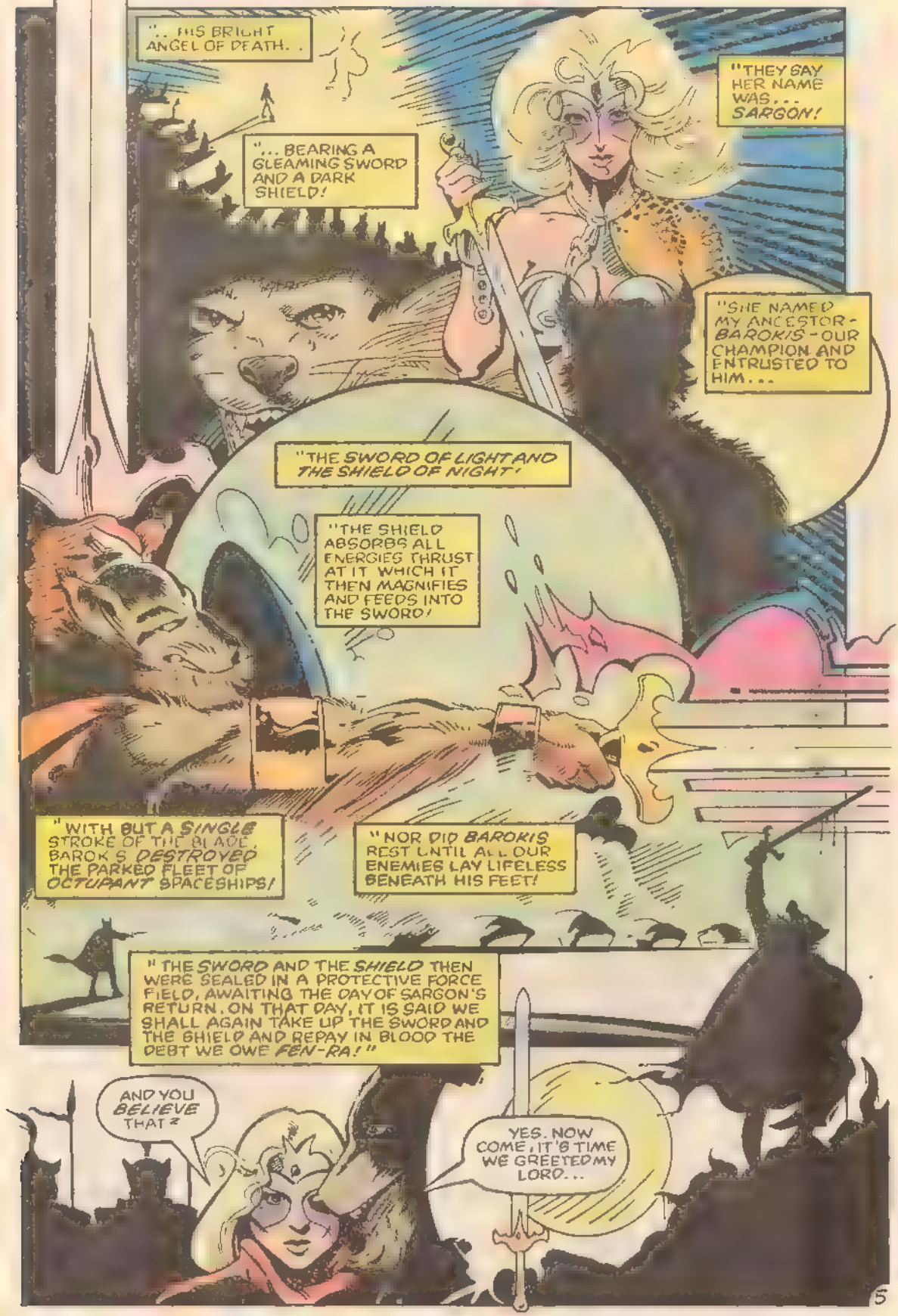

RUN FOR IT, KANESS!
WAK

COME BACK HERE, YOU MORAL DEGENERATES!


DODGING AND TWISTING THE FUGITIVE WARRIORS EVADE THE BLISTERING LASERFIRE TO REACH THE DOGSTAR!


SECURE THE HATCH BERTHA! I'M TAKING OFF!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! HIT IT!
JUDAS PRIEST!
THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!

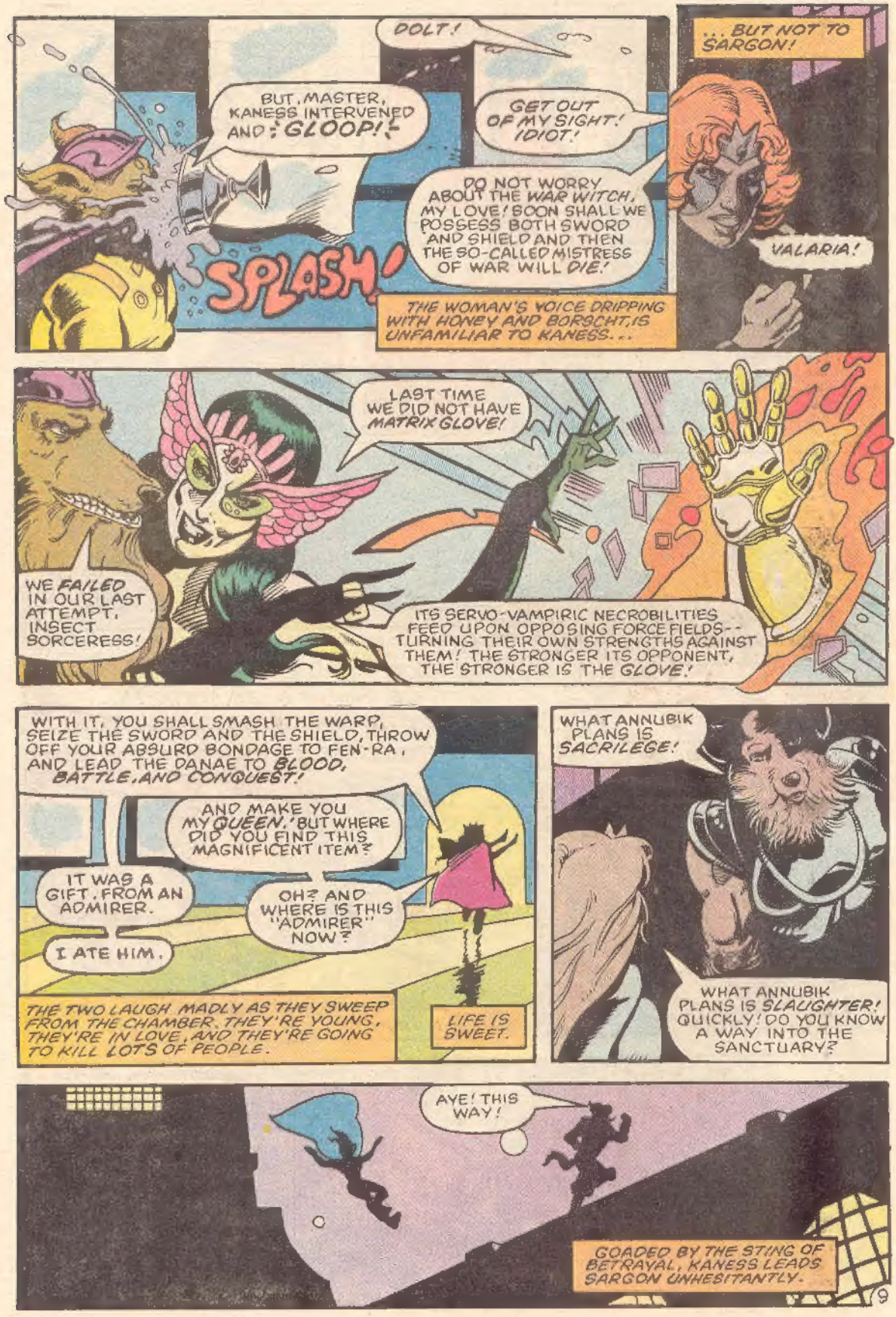

KANESS' HANDS FLICKER OVER THE CONTROLS.
AND THE DOGSTAR SCREAMS OUT INTO THE NIGHT!
THAT WAS FUN. ARE ALL YOUR PEOPLE AS INTERESTING AS YOU, FRIEND KANESS?
THE DANAE ARE A NOBLE RACE, FRIEND BERTHA, BRED TO HONOR AND BOUND TO LOYALTY.
LOYALTY TO WHOM-OR TO WHAT?
TO EACH OTHER. TO OUR OATHS AND TRADITIONS. ABOVE ALL, TO OUR MASTER, OUR LORD-ANNUBIK!
ANNUBIK IS THE EXEMPLAR OF OUR RACE.. IN HIM IS PERSONIFIED ALL THAT IS GREAT IN US.
BUT YOU ARE THEIR CHAMPION!
WUF! I AM BUT THE WEAPON ANNUBIK WIELDS! YOU'LL SEE. I'LL PRESENT YOU WHEN WE REACH ..
".. DANUS!"
THE DOGS OF WAR ARE LEGENDS IN THE GALAXY FOR THEIR READINESS TO EVER RAISE THEIR SWORDS IN THE AID OF THE DEFENSELESS.
THEIR DWELLINGS HERE IN THEIR CAPITOL CITY BAROKAN- ARE APPROPRIATELY SPARTAN, SAVE FOR TWO. .
THE LARGER BUILDING IS THE PALACE OF ANNUBIK. THERE WE MUST GO FIRST.
AH THAT IS THE RELIQUARY OF OUR MOST SACRED POSSESSIONS -- THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD!
WHAT IS THE SMALLER STRUCTURE NEAR IT?
THE WHAT AND THE WHICH?
THE SWORD OF LIGHT AND THE SHIELD OF NIGHT!
"CENTURIES AGO, WE DANAE WERE A PEACEFUL FOLK, UNTIL THE COMING OF..
...THE OCTUPANTS!
"WITHOUT WARN NG. THEY INVADED!
"WITHOUT MERCY, THEY SLAUGHTERED US! WE APPEALED FOR HELP IN THE NAME OF HE-WHO-DREAMS TO THE REALM OF FEN-RA AND ITS MYSTIC LEADER, LUGULBANDA! HE HEARD OUR PRAYER AND SENT TO US...

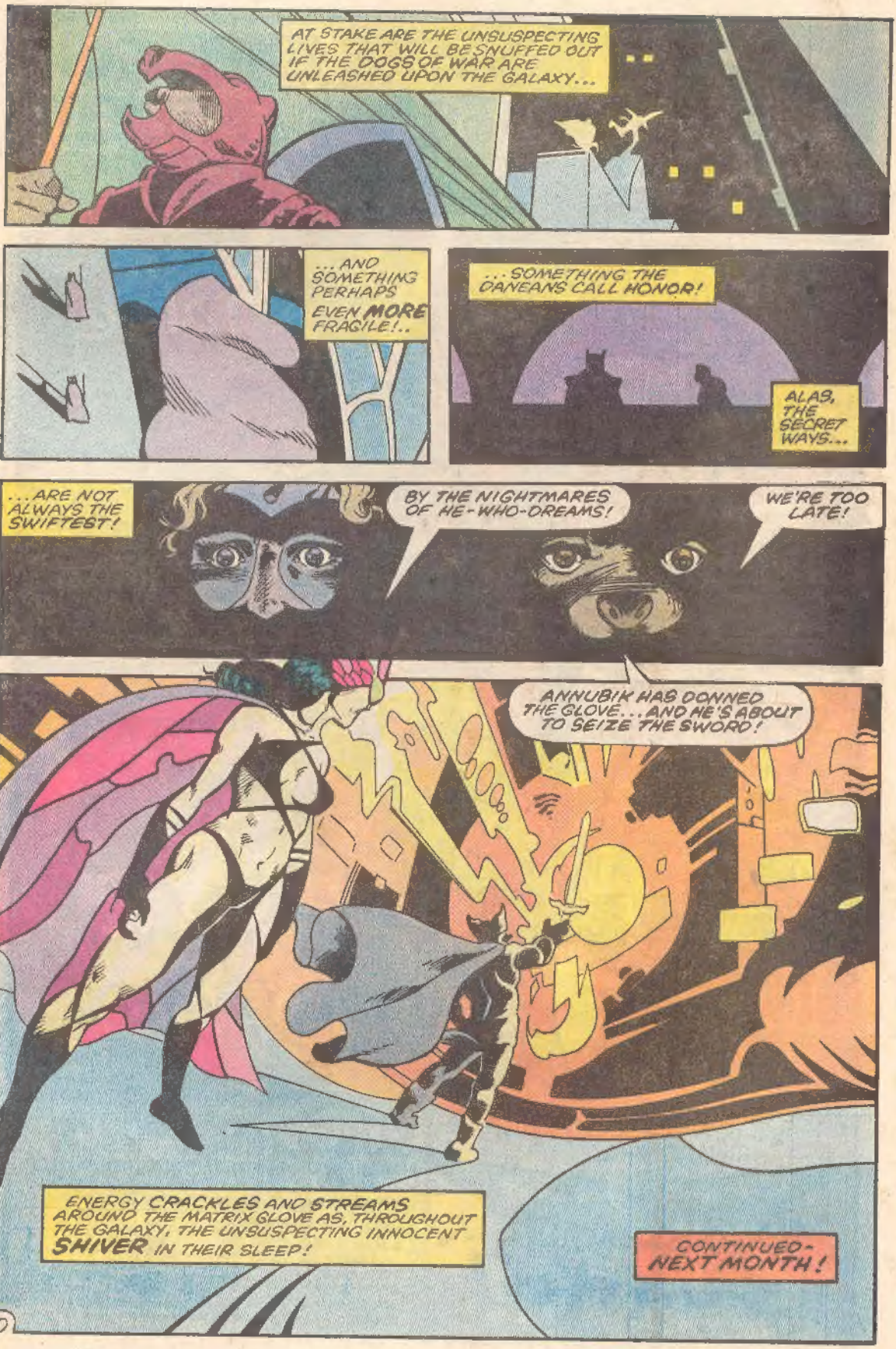

"... HIS BRIGHT ANGEL OF DEATH. .
"... BEARING A GLEAMING SWORD AND A DARK SHIELD!
"THEY SAY HER NAME WAS... SARGON!
"SHE NAMED MY ANCESTOR - BAROKIS - OUR CHAMPION AND ENTRUSTED TO HIM...
"THE SWORD OF LIGHT AND THE SHIELD OF NIGHT!
"THE SHIELD ABSORBS ALL ENERGIES THRUST AT IT WHICH IT THEN MAGNIFIES AND FEEDS INTO THE SWORD!
"WITH BUT A SINGLE STROKE OF THE BLADE, BAROKIS DESTROYED THE PARKED FLEET OF OCTUPANT SPACESHIPS!
"NOR DID BAROKIS REST UNTIL ALL OUR ENEMIES LAY LIFELESS BENEATH HIS FEET!
"THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD THEN WERE SEALED IN A PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD, AWAITING THE DAY OF SARGON'S RETURN. ON THAT DAY, IT IS SAID WE SHALL AGAIN TAKE UP THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD AND REPAY IN BLOOD THE DEBT WE OWE FEN-RA!"
AND YOU BELIEVE THAT?
YES. NOW COME, IT'S TIME WE GREETED MY LORD...

LORD ANNUBIK, MAY I PRESENT TO YOU A NEW SWORD-FRIEND, BERTHA OF..
THE WOMAN IS KNOWN TO ME. CHAMPION OF THE DANAE, AND I PROCLAIM HER UNWELCOME ON DANUS! SHE MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
"! "ANNUBIK!"
BUT, SIRE! I HAVE NAMED HER SWORD-FRIEND! THIS VIOLATES OUR TRADITIONS OF HOSPITALITY!
SILENCE! NOT EVEN YOU MAY QUESTION MY WILL, KANESS KANORUM! SHE MAY STAY FOR THE EVENING MEAL, IF YOU INSIST, BUT ERE DAWN SHE MUST BE GONE FROM DANUS! NOW, LEAVE ME!
BERTHA... MY APOLOGIES, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY
NEVER MIND, KANESS BESIDES, IT'S NOT YOUR WAY TO QUESTION, IS IT?
BUT THE DOUBTS GNAWING AT THE DANEAN'S HEART ARE NOT QUELLED...
...NOT EVEN BY A LARGE QUANTITY OF DRINK THAT NIGHT AT THE BANQUET.
...BERTHA. ?
NOW WHERE'S SHE OFF TO?

NO ONE SEES THE WOMAN LEAVE, SAVE KANESS. NO ONE SEES HIM FOLLOW. STEPPING OUT INTO THE NIGHT, THE CHAMPION OF THE DOGS OF WAR FINDS...
NOTHING. QUIET AS A TOMB. WUF! DON'T THINK LIKE THAT, OLD BOY. GOTTA FIND BERTHA. WHERE'D SHE GET TO?
EH? WHAT'S THAT? BERTHA?
KTANG!
BY THE HOUNDS OF HELL! ASSASSINS! AND THEY'RE STRIKING AT...
"...MY GUEST!"
PAK!
BACK! BACK, YOU FLEA-SPAWNED SONS OF A JACKAL!
CHEW FIST, FANG FACE!
FOK!
FLEE LIKE THE CRAVEN CURS THAT YOU ARE! BY MY COLLAR, ANNUBIK SHALL HEAR OF THIS!
ANNUBIK ORDERED IT, KANESS!
IMPOSSIBLE!

IT'S TIME YOU KNEW THE TRUTH, KANESS! OUR MEETING IN CYNOSURE WAS NO ACCIDENT! I STARTED THE BRAWL JUST FOR THAT PURPOSE!
BUT...FRIEND BERTHA... WHY?
NOT BERTHA, KANESS. MY TRUE NAME IS...
...SARGON...
...AND I AM NO ANGEL BUT FEN-RA'S MISTRESS OF WAR!
THIS RING SHALL BE MY BONAFIDE. LUGULBANDA BADE ME COME TO DANUS INCOGNITO, FOR AN ATTEMPT HAD BEEN MADE TO BREAK THE WARP AND STEAL THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD. THE ATTEMPT FAILED BUT NOT BEFORE IT SET OFF AN ALARM IN FEN-RA.
BUT YOUR LORD ANNUBIK RECOGNISED ME AND I NOW THINK HE WAS BEHIND THE ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD!
I'M SORRY, BERTH... SARGON... BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT!
COME WITH ME AND I'LL PROVE IT-OR WOULD YOU RATHER WALLOW IN YOUR NAIVETE?
WITH A LOW GROWL, KANESS FOLLOWS SARGON...
...ALTHOUGH THE PATH TO TRUTH FOLLOWS A TWISTED TRAIL OVER THE ROOFTOPS...
...LEADING TO THE BALCONY OUTSIDE ANNUBIK'S PRIVATE QUARTERS!
BY HE-WHO-DREAMS!


DOLT!
BUT, MASTER, KANESS INTERVENED AND—
GLOOP!
SPLASH!
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT! IDIOT!
DO NOT WORRY ABOUT THE WAR WITCH, MY LOVE! SOON SHALL WE POSSESS BOTH SWORD AND SHIELD AND THEN THE SO-CALLED MISTRESS OF WAR WILL DIE!
THE WOMAN'S VOICE DRIPPING WITH HONEY AND BORSCHT, IS UNFAMILIAR TO KANESS...
... BUT NOT TO SARGON!
VALARIA!
LAST TIME WE DID NOT HAVE MATRIX GLOVE!
WE FAILED IN OUR LAST ATTEMPT, INSECT SORCERESS!
ITS SERVO-VAMPIRIC NECROBILITIES FEED UPON OPPOSING FORCE FIELDS—TURNING THEIR OWN STRENGTHS AGAINST THEM! THE STRONGER ITS OPPONENT, THE STRONGER IS THE GLOVE!
WITH IT, YOU SHALL SMASH THE WARP, SEIZE THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD, THROW OFF YOUR ABSURD BONDAGE TO FEN-RA, AND LEAD THE DANAE TO BLOOD, BATTLE, AND CONQUEST!
AND MAKE YOU MY QUEEN. BUT WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS MAGNIFICENT ITEM?
IT WAS A GIFT, FROM AN ADMIRER.
OH? AND WHERE IS THIS "ADMIRER" NOW?
I ATE HIM.
THE TWO LAUGH MADLY AS THEY SWEEP FROM THE CHAMBER. THEY'RE YOUNG, THEY'RE IN LOVE, AND THEY'RE GOING TO KILL LOTS OF PEOPLE.
LIFE IS SWEET.
WHAT ANNUBIK PLANS IS SACRILEGE!
WHAT ANNUBIK PLANS IS SLAUGHTER! QUICKLY! DO YOU KNOW A WAY INTO THE SANCTUARY?
AYE! THIS WAY!
GOADED BY THE STING OF BETRAYAL, KANESS LEADS SARGON UNHESITANTLY.


AT STAKE ARE THE UNSUSPECTING LIVES THAT WILL BE SNUFFED OUT IF THE DOGS OF WAR ARE UNLEASHED UPON THE GALAXY...
...AND SOMETHING PERHAPS EVEN MORE FRAGILE!..
...SOMETHING THE DANEANS CALL HONOR!
ALAS, THE SECRET WAYS...
...ARE NOT ALWAYS THE SWIFTEST!
BY THE NIGHTMARES OF HE-WHO-DREAMS!
WE'RE TOO LATE!
ANNUBIK HAS DONNED THE GLOVE...AND HE'S ABOUT TO SEIZE THE SWORD!
ENERGY CRACKLES AND STREAMS AROUND THE MATRIX GLOVE AS, THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY, THE UNSUSPECTING INNOCENT SHIVER IN THEIR SLEEP!
CONTINUED-NEXT MONTH!